



Dornix Park Restoration Project Position Statement

Position Statement: The Yellowstone River Conservation District Council (YRCDC) supports and encourages the efforts of the Dornix Park Citizens Committee and the City of Big Timber to restore and develop Dornix Park in Big Timber, Montana for parkland, recreation, and wildlife habitat.

Introduction

In April 2006 citizens from Big Timber, Montana began developing a public park and recreation area on a parcel of city-owned property that includes the old Big Timber landfill (a Brownfield site), Boulder River frontage and the former Stene/Williams homestead.

The park site is a working landscape; animals graze in the fields, and the city of Big Timber utilizes adjacent areas for waste disposal, recycling, composting, storage, and water treatment. The Dornix Park Citizens Committee intends to establish a part that demonstrates successful multi-community uses: preservation, restoration, recreation, wildlife habitat, growing food, outdoor education and continuing city public works.

Background

The Dornix Park Citizens Committee and the City of Big Timber is working to develop a multi-use park on approximately 50 acres of city property that includes:

- The original 1880s town site of Dornix
- Boulder River frontage
- An old homestead with orchard, irrigated fields, and grazing land
- An abandoned land fill

A Master Plan has been developed and includes the following components:

- **Brownfield Reclamation.** The old landfill will be utilized as passive open space for community activities, trail systems, and short grass prairie reclamation. Proper establishment and management of these areas will result in increased wildlife habitat and add to the educational experience of park visitors. The open space will have an irrigation system to help establish the prairie grasses. Once established, the native vegetation will be sustained through natural precipitation.
- **Environmental Learning Center.** A public building to serve as the hub for the park and will provide opportunities to demonstrate innovative green technologies. Associated elements within this complex will include a greenhouse, outdoor areas for growing food, and an outdoor pavilion. The Learning Center will also serve as a gather place for community activities, including educational classes, day camps and conferences.
- **Pavilion.** The outdoor pavilion and open lawn be used for public gatherings including concerts and community events. A band shell and long, open air pergolas



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will be constructed of recycled wood and local stone veneers. They will be planted with native vines to provide shade and wind protection. The lawn will have an irrigation system fed by nearby irrigation ditches and supplemented with well water.

- **Constructed Wetlands.** Currently the water treatment facility for the City of Big Timber cleans water to a condition suitable for human consumption. However, because of the rate of the treated water discharge, the health of the Boulder River ecosystem will be threatened, especially as Big Timber grows. To address this problem wetlands with sedges, bulrushes, cattails and sweet grass will be constructed to further cleanse the treated water. This system will have a series of ponds that hold water for filtration, infiltration, and temperature control before it discharges into the Boulder.
- **Wetland Boardwalks.** The wetlands on site are opportunities for boardwalks and outdoor classrooms. The boardwalks will be constructed of durable composite lumber made of recycled materials. They will be held in place with a pier system that makes the smallest possible footprint in the wetlands.
- **Trail System.** The trail system near the Boulder River will be divided into three types. A single 12' wide emergency vehicle access, medium trails also ADA accessible, and a small mowed trail less than 6' wide. The small trail will be located through sensitive riparian areas and will be designed for quiet, passive use.

Role of the YRCDC

The Governor's office, state and federal agencies, and local residents look to the YRCDC for leadership in maintaining and enhancing the unique values associated with the Yellowstone River. YRCDC is a coalition of conservation districts along the full length of the Yellowstone River. They are assisted by a citizen-based Resource Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee. The position taken on Dornix Park by the YRCDC is based on their desire to be a supporter of local people and groups in the wise use of resources within the Yellowstone River basin.

Implementation

The YRCDC will provide letters of support and verbal support as the need arises. YRCDC staff will maintain contact with the local Dornix Park Citizen's Committee and the City of Big Timber to continue looking into available financial resources to assist them in fulfilling their objectives.